

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES for December will contain the report upon the Guild papers received, together with particulars of the new work which we hope to enter upon with the New Year.

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Early numbers of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES will contain articles by Professor J. Rawson Lumby, D.D., Cambridge; Professor S. D. F. Salmond, D.D., Aberdeen; Professor A. H. Sayce, LL.D., Oxford; The Dean of Gloucester; Principal C. H. Waller, M.A., London; and the Rev. F. H. Woods, B.D., Oxford.

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Mr. Murray has just issued the Bampton Lectures for 1890. The Lecturer, it will be remembered, was Archdeacon Watkins of Durham, and the subject is the literary and critical problems of the Fourth Gospel. *The problem of the Fourth Gospel is not the authorship. That may be considered settled for the present as far as English scholarship is concerned. It is the mode of thought of this Gospel, so different from the Synoptic, yet so assured, so sustained throughout. Archdeacon Watkins has seen this. St. John's unique glory is that he discerned the need of translation, not of words only, but of thought, the translation of the memoirs of unlettered fishermen and peasants into forms of thought which might appeal to the minds of another place and another time, minds that had tasted of speculation, religious and philosophical. He made the translation, and met the need; and yet St. John's is the Gospel in which modern fishermen and peasants take most*

delight. It is an interesting problem, but it cannot be said to be pressing yet.

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The most pressing problem in New Testament criticism is the origin and mutual relation of the Synoptic Gospels. It is also the most difficult. Speaking from the Divinity Chair of Dublin University, Dr. Salmon acknowledged his reluctance to enter into this subject. "Not that I share the feelings of some who regard their belief in the inspiration of the Gospels as precluding any such inquiry. My reluctance," he said, "to enter with you upon this inquiry arises solely from my sense of its extreme difficulty." But to the true student of God's Word, "difficulty" is like Mirabeau's "impossible;" it is a "blockhead of a word." It is with this Book as it is with the Book of Nature. If God has more light to break forth from His Word, it is not otherwise than through the resolute and reverent pains which we bestow upon it.

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The origin of the Gospels is, however, a problem of such unusual perplexity, that one should endeavour to approach it by the best available path. For much depends upon one's approach. Our own experience was not fortunate in this respect. Our first serious attempt to grapple with the problem was made over the tenth volume of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and Dr. Abbott's terrible article there. Any of the general "Introductions to the New Testament" were better than that—Dods, Salmon, Weiss, Bleek, or even Davidson. Even Rushbrooke's *Synopticon* itself were preferable, as

at some stage it is indispensable. Better than these, however, is Abbott and Rushbrooke's *Common Tradition of the Synoptic Gospels* (Macmillan, 1884, 3s. 6d.), a work which has introduced many a New Testament student in these recent years, and not unpleasantly at all. But there is not one of these that in our judgment can compete for this particular purpose with Mr. Wright's *Composition of the Four Gospels*, just issued by Macmillan (*The Composition of the Four Gospels: A Critical Inquiry*. By the Rev. Arthur Wright, M.A., Fellow and Tutor of Queen's College, Cambridge. Macmillan, 1890, 5s.). Mr. Wright contributes one of our "Replies" this month. For we were engaged upon his book, and much interested in it, when the "Request" came in, and we at once sent it to him. We have printed the Request, as well as the Reply, in full. The one indicates the pressure of the problem, the other the lines upon which a solution should be sought. But the best Reply is Mr. Wright's new book.

When a new book on an old perplexity appears, "What is the writer's conclusion?" is the question that is asked. But in such inquiries that is one of the smallest matters, and we shall not answer it now. Probably no scholar has spoken the final word yet on any part of this intricate subject, though it is pleasant to see Mr. F. H. Woods in *Studia Biblica* (vol. ii. p. 94) express the hope that critics are about to come to "an agreement upon this one point," viz. "that the common tradition upon which all the three Synoptics were based is substantially our St. Mark, as far as *matter, general form, and order* are concerned." The chapter in Mr. Wright's book which will be read with most interest is probably the last, under the title, "The Inspiration of the Gospels." For here lies to many minds the real importance of the inquiry into the origin of the Gospels: it touches so closely the doctrine of inspiration. It does touch that doctrine closely. There is material enough here to fight the whole battle of inspiration, without once trenching upon the criticism of the Old Testament. There is no possible theory of inspiration but may be put to the test by the phenomena which the three earliest Gospels present. Quite recently we have seen that here—upon the question of discrepancies in the Gospels—most of the points at issue may

become intelligible to minds which have no knowledge of or interest in Old Testament criticism, and not merely intelligible but extremely vital and disputable. Therefore it is that, notwithstanding the Bishop of Durham's expectation that for some time study will concentrate itself on the Old Testament, there are critics even of the Old Testament who look to the phenomena of the Gospels to provide that "workable" theory of inspiration which they hope to see established.

Professor T. Witton Davies of Haverfordwest contributes a paper to the September issue of the *Old and New Testament Student* on "Leprosy." He agrees with Sir Erasmus Wilson, Sir R. Bennett, and others, that modern leprosy, such as that of which Damien died, is an entirely different disease from the leprosy of the Bible, and ought to go by a different name. The characteristics of modern leprosy are sores both on the outside of the skin and also in the inside, disease of internal organs, as the liver, the kidneys, and alimentary canal, and waste of limb, which only ends with death. "This leprosy," says Professor Davies, "has been described by travellers in language strong and hard to read; yet from what I saw in Egypt and in Palestine, I consider no words too strong in which to set forth its awfulness. I have seen the open sores, the deformities of face and hands, the poor creatures going about with several of their limbs altogether gone." The leprosy spoken of in Leviticus and throughout the Bible is an entirely different disease. There is no mention of loss or even deformity of limb. The only points in which they resemble one another is that the skin is affected in both, and that both are loathsome. "Nothing is more clear than that there are many kinds of leprosy referred to in the Bible, but all of them are diseases of the skin, more or less serious, none of them being particularly perilous to life." The confusion of the two diseases, and the application of the one name, leprosy, to both, has been traced to the Arab physicians. But the distinction, which is now known to be real in fact, should be maintained in name; and Sir Erasmus Wilson suggests that we should follow the Greeks by keeping "Leprosy" for the Bible disease and "Elephantiasis" for modern leprosy. The Bible

leprosy is in Hebrew *tsāra'ath* (צַרְעָתָא), which the LXX. translate by *lepra* (λέπρα), and *lepra* is the word in the New Testament; so that the suggestion would accord well with biblical language.

It has been much debated of late whether leprosy is contagious. Whatever may be said of modern leprosy (*elephantiasis*), Professor Davies holds that Bible leprosy is not. "There is no instance in Scripture of the disease being caught by contact with another." What, then, is the meaning of "unclean" and the "several house"? Mr. Davies replies that the word "unclean" has a special meaning in the Mosaic law; many healthy animals were "unclean;" while separation (which was not universal—witness the cases of Naaman and Gehazi) was resorted to because of the extreme unpleasantness of the disease, and as a lesson in cleanly habits. Nor is Bible leprosy hereditary. At least there is no instance given where it was hereditary, and the want of such instance is strong evidence that it was not. Professor Davies concludes: "In many modern sermons, references are made which apply to modern leprosy only, and it is to be feared that many of us have stock sermons which require altering in this direction; but we had better be correct, however many popular sermons we spoil."

To preach is one thing: to preach on preaching is a more difficult thing: but surely the superlative of difficulty is reached when one has to preach on preaching in a place where great men preach on preaching every year, and have their sermons published. Nevertheless, Dr. A. J. F. Behrends, the Yale Lecturer on Preaching for 1890, has just issued a volume, under the title of *The Philosophy of Preaching*, which will stand comparison in interest and real value with any course of lectures on preaching yet published (London: R. D. Dickinson, 1890). "The Philosophy of Preaching" is not the most descriptive title that could have been chosen; that name properly belongs to the first two chapters only. "The Principles of Preaching" would have covered the whole book; but it may be that some other of the numerous courses of Yale Lectures on Preaching has already appropriated that title.

Dr. Behrends' book (of which we may remark parenthetically that it is worth seeking out as a specimen of beautiful printing) is eloquent throughout; but it is most eloquent in the chapters which deal with the "spiritual element" in preaching. Here we have a forcible exposition of the words of St. Paul in Romans viii. 6,—“To be spiritually minded (literally, ‘the mind of the spirit,’ τὸ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος) is life and peace.” He says: “In defining spirituality as a fixed mental and moral habit, to be carefully distinguished from ecstasy or from emotional excitement, having its *rational* ground in the clear discernment of what God and man are in their essential nature and in their mutual relations, and its *ethical* quality in the voluntary and habitual subjection of the conscious and active life to the judgments which such discernment forms, I have propounded no theory of my own. I have simply given to the language of Scripture its natural force. Spirituality is, in the carefully selected phraseology of St. Paul, φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος, ‘the mind of the Spirit.’ The word φρόνημα has no exact English equivalent. It is not synonymous with νοῦς, the equivalent of our word ‘understanding’ or ‘reason,’ the faculty of rational perception and judgment. Our nearest approach to such a use of the word ‘mind’ as makes it reflect the meaning of φρόνημα, is in the frequent popular saying, ‘I have a great mind to do this or that,’ a phrase which not only expresses a rational judgment, but also announces an intention. . . . The ‘mind’ in you is what you are in your thoughts, desires, and aims. It is the man in the centre of his personality, stripped of all that is seeming and accidental. . . . And to be spiritually minded is to have the thoughts, the desires, and the aims of the Spirit, to survey and measure all things from the centre of the invisible and the eternal, judging yourself as God judges you, treating your fellow-men as God would have you treat them, estimating life as God estimates it, honouring God as He deserves to be honoured.”

One of the chapters in Dr. Behrends' Yale Lectures is entitled "The Personal Element in Preaching." There he says: "As a rule, audiences are more responsive than sympathetic. Often they are cold and critical, if not positively

hostile. When at their best they wait to be moved, and they can be powerfully and permanently moved only by words that convey strong personal conviction, and provoke an instant affirmative response. This is the only personal element which has any legitimate place in the theory of preaching." We bear glad witness that the *offensive* personal element is absent from these lectures. So consistently is it absent, indeed, that the few sentences of personal biography in the last chapter come upon us with the pleasure of freshness and novelty. "When, twenty-five years ago, I was graduated from the theological seminary, and ordained as pastor over a quiet suburban church on the banks of the Hudson River, I determined that my first work should be a close and patient study of the Person of Christ. I felt that I must know who my Master was. The first book I purchased was Dorner's *History of the Person of Christ*, which still remains the best monograph on the subject. For more than two years I plodded along, reading right and left, as my time and resources would permit, in systematic and historical theology, with close and constant reference to the Gospels and Epistles as written in their chronological order. I have never regretted the choice I made. Nor have I regretted the studies which followed it, when I made Müller's monograph on the Doctrine of Sin the subject of an equally close reading. I doubt whether a theological graduate can do better now than to begin his pastoral studies with Christology. Until that is mastered, I would shelve eschatology. For in my deliberate judgment, the constitution of our Lord's Person is the one thing on which the most definite instruction is needed, and with regard to which there is a subtle and insidious tendency in modern thought to depart from the New Testament representation."

We could wish that the American students who are trained under Dr. Behrends' Lectures would not lose sight of their excellent literary style. The published sermons of American preachers do not often attain the dignity of literature. They are hard to read. We have no doubt that the *Homiletic Review*, which is conducted with great spirit and resource, publishes the very best sermons to be had every

month. Yet the sermons are decidedly the weakest feature of the magazine, and, in our judgment, do not compare for a moment with what a similar selection would be in England, or even in Scotland alone. And the volumes of published American sermons of outstanding merit, which have reached this country, are very few. There are, without going so far back as to Bushnell's *New Life*, Dr. Phillips Brooks's three volumes, published by Macmillan; Dr. Newman Smyth's and Dr. Munger's; Dr. Van Dyke's *Reality of Religion*, which Fisher Unwin issues; Shedd's two volumes, especially *Sermons to the Natural Man*; Dr. Marvin Vincent's *God and Bread*, published by James Clarke; and—well, we cannot recall any more that "a well-selected library" need include. Henry Ward Beecher's? No. Magnificent in delivery as they were, they will not read, and it needs no inspiration to prophesy that they will not live. But there is another volume, just fallen into our hands, which we feel inclined to add to the list. It goes by the title of the *Calvary Pulpit*, for the Sermons were preached in the Calvary Baptist Church, New York, by the Rev. Robert S. MacArthur (Funk & Wagnalls, 1890, 4s.). Like almost all American sermons they have the flavour of the pulpit much more than of the study. We are sure it was a pleasure to hear Mr. MacArthur preach them: it is not quite such a pleasure to read them. For one thing, the sentences are too sharp and short. But there is careful expository work, breadth of sympathy, definite evangelical doctrine.

*The Saturday Review* of 20th September has a most appreciative notice of the late Dr. William Wright's *Lectures on the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages*, just issued from the Cambridge University Press, under the editorship of Professor Robertson Smith. The subject which the reviewer finds most interesting in the book is the discussion of the philological relationship between the Semitic and Aryan languages. It is a curious fact that while scholars are inclined at present to deny any traceable relationship between the languages, they are also, on independent grounds, separating the early homes of the races, removing both from Central Asia, and planting them, the one in Arabia and the other in Southern Russia.